

Do you know the New Worker Protection Standards??

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Tis the season for Private Pesticide Applicator Training and the new updates for the Worker Protection Standards (WPS). For the 2016 year, there are many changes occurring in Worker Protection Standards with which agriculture operators/employers are required to comply. Please keep in mind that these changes are specifically for workers on your agriculture operations that are *NOT* immediate family. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines immediate family as unpaid parents, children, grandparents, grandchildren, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, and first cousins. Paid family members and everyone else are considered a worker or handler and must comply with WPS.

The purpose of the Worker Protection Standards are to protect agriculture workers and pesticide handlers from exposure to applied pesticides. The following are the new policies for training requirements. The training requirements for all workers and handlers have been increased greatly; handlers and workers must receive annual trainings from a certified trainer, which is an individual that has completed an EPA approved train-the-trainer course. A certified trainer includes anyone with a valid pesticide applicators license. Unfortunately, there is no longer a training grace period recognized for workers and handlers, therefore they need to complete the training prior to any pesticide applications. Also, the employer shall keep records of the trainings for all workers and handlers for 2 years while providing a copy when requested by employees.

Requirements for training is not the only thing that has changed. To effectively communicate the application of pesticides to all workers and handlers, the employer must display application information (pesticide sprayed, application rate, re-entry interval, field sprayed, crop sprayed, etc.) and display safety data sheets at a central location within 24 hours of the pesticide application and prior to workers entering that treated area. This information shall also be displayed for 30 days after the re-entry period has expired. Along with displaying the application information, the employer shall also display the information on pesticide safety that includes the seven concepts about preventing pesticides from entering the body, encourage employees to seek medical attention as soon as possible if they were poisoned, injured or made ill by pesticides, and listing nearby medical care facilities.

Signs communicating the pesticide hazard shall also be posted at entry points into the fields if the re-entry period is greater than 48 hours or re-entry period is greater than 4 hours for enclosed spaces (grain silos, greenhouses, etc.). Warning signs shall be a red circle containing a stern face with upraised left hand with the top saying "DANGER PESTICIDES" and the bottom "KEEP OUT". The employer must also prohibit entry to the application exclusion zone which is 100 feet around the application equipment during pesticide application. The pesticide handler must apply pesticides in a way to not contact other persons. For the purpose of pesticide decontamination, the employer shall also provide one gallon of water for each worker and three gallons for each handler and each early entry worker in the area of the employee's activity. The employer shall also provide an eye wash station to handlers when using products that require eye protection. If a product requires eye protection or is used in a pressurized closed system, there shall be an eye wash system at the mix/load site that is capable of delivering .4 gallons/minute of water for 15 minutes or 6

gallons of water that flows gently for about 15 minutes, while also providing one pint of water in a portable container for field use.

This is only a portion of the new changes to the Worker Protection Standards, so please plan on attending your local Private Pesticide Applicators Training. Additional Worker protection Standard training will be offered across the state in the next 12 months with greater detail. We encourage you to attend. For questions or further information on the Worker Protection Standards contact your local Extension Office.